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the career of the artist was, when the plain facts were told, far beyond the wildest dreams of the most imaginative romancer. With his skill as an artist he combined a fiery temper, impatient of restraint; a mercurial temperament, incapable of remaining long in one place; a swaggering boastfulness, which was only too characteristic of his countrymen of that day; and he was even more prone than most of his countrymen to the use of the dagger on those with whom he had quarreled. That the career of such a character should be an eventful one it needs not much of a prophet to foretell.

He was born at Florence, November 1, 1500. His father had studied drawing and engineering, was an excellent musician, and made some of the best musical instruments, especially spinets, which had been seen; he also carved well in ivory. The young Benvenuto, at the age of fifteen, entered as an apprentice the shop of a goldsmith, who was surnamed Marcone, where he made rapid progress. At sixteen he saw his brother fighting a duel, and, rushing up sword in hand, rescued him, for which exploit he was banished to a distance of ten miles from the town for six months, a very light sentence.

Now began his wanderings, which we have not space to follow. He went first to Sienna; next to Bologna; then back to Florence, and thence to Pisa, where he much improved, especially by the study of a mass of antiques which he found in the town. Returning to his old master at Florence, he seems to have studied hard and to have achieved a number of successes, but he was getting restless and started for Rome, where he remained a short time before again setting out on his travels, but, killing a rival, he was obliged to return to Rome, where he found plenty of work, executing orders for the Pope and nearly all the cardinals. His fame began to grow while here, and his vanity and conceit more than kept pace with it.

It would almost require a volume to tell of his life at Rome; his rivalries; his studies, in which, it must be admitted, he was unremitting; his works, of which he produced some of the most beautiful he ever executed; his share in the defense of the city against the Constable de Bourbon, which reads like a chapter from Munchausen. On his departure after the siege he started for Florence, but went to Mantua, and when he finally reached Florence found his father dead of the plague. He soon returned to Rome, where Clement VII., then Pope, employed him first in making a cope button, then a chalice, and finally set him to coining the papal money and executing two medals. Before, however, these were finished Clement died. Paul III., who succeeded to the tiara, employed Benvenuto; but, being less liberal than his predecessor, they soon quarreled, and Cellini went to Venice, and thence to Florence, where the reigning Medici employed him in making his coins. He soon returned to Rome, where he received absolution for his many homicides, and was set to work, but not getting the pay he demanded for putting solid gold covers on a book the Pope desired to present to Charles V. of Spain, he went to France, and offered his services to Francis I., but that monarch, being busily engaged in war, had no time for art, and Cellini returned to Rome, where he was soon seized and thrown into prison on some charge made against him by dissatisfied workmen. His story of his imprisonment and attempts at escape is a chapter of romance. He was at last released through the agency of Cardinal Ferrara, of France, absolved by the Pope, and set to work for the cardinal, for whom he made the celebrated salt-cellar which is now in the Museum of Antiques at Vienna. During his residence in France Benvenuto executed some of the finest of his smaller works, of which the "Nymph of Fontainebleau" is probably the most important as it is the most pretentious, although his cups and vases, executed at this time, were eagerly sought after and were indeed marvels of execution. We engrave a vase and cup of oriental jasper mounted in gold which are excellent samples of his work at this period.

Quarreling with the king's favorite, the Duchess d'Etampes, Cellini was obliged to flee, and went to Florence, where he entered the service of the Duke Cosmo, where he remained, with short absences, until his death in 1571. While there he executed his great work in bronze, the "Perseus" (of which an engraving has been heretofore published in THE ALDINE), on which his fame must now chiefly rest, since most of his works in the precious metals have been destroyed. The story of his struggles in casting this is a touching one, as told by himself, but is too long

for us to copy, and no paraphrase could do it justice. It is one of those narrations which admit of no rewriting. The story of itself, how he had arranged everything for the final casting, and was then, as his workmen supposed, defeated at the last moment by an accident; how he overcame that accident by his indomitable will and uncalculable recklessness; how he finally brought out the "Perseus" intact, except a defect in one foot; all these are told in his memoirs, and have been told in romance, but we can not repeat them.

—J. A. Peters, M. D.

ART AND BREAD AND BUTTER.

THAT accomplished playwright and actor, Mr. Dion Boucicault, writing in the *North American Review* about the decline of the drama, tells us how after the success of his first play he was forced either to become a translator and adapter of the works of other dramatists, or leave the stage; for the reason, as he states it, that while he could get but £100 for a play that took six months' hard work to compose, he could easily earn £150 in a fortnight by translating plays from the French. It will be seen from this that Mr. Boucicault, like many another follower of the arts, looks upon art first of all as a means of getting money, and this is not a singular view to take of the matter; but it does seem to me that Mr. Boucicault and others who hold to such like extremely practical ideas of the artist's duty to art and himself need scarcely go beyond themselves to find reason for the unsatisfactory condition of art in these times. Nor is it exactly fair from this bread-and-butter point of view to censure the press for its lack of ability and conscience; for may not the press find that flippant and unconscientious criticism is much the most popular and paying kind? It seems to me that if Mr. Boucicault wants to better the condition of the drama, he would do well to begin by convincing the theatre-going public that good legitimate plays are much more enjoyable than sensational and inartistic ones. I believe, though, that it is the common opinion that "London Assurance," which Mr. Boucicault wrote when a boy, is abler than anything he has done since; and it may be that overmuch catering to the uneducated popular taste, for money-making purposes, has blunted this dramatist's artistic perceptions to the degree of rendering him incapable of composing a good play.

Now the mistake that Mr. Boucicault made, and the mistake that very many artists make when they start out in life, is the mistake of an unenlightened selfishness. They entertain the somewhat primitive and barbarous idea that they "must live;" by which they mean having every thing comfortable about them, and being "respectable." They want to conform to the usages of society—live in a fashionable quarter of the town and hold up their heads—all of which are good and commendable things for butchers and grocers' boys to aspire to. But the artist's motives should be other than these, and his incentives higher, or he will only spoil the possible making of an honest man and good citizen by trying in this sort of half-hearted way to become an interpreter of the unseen beauties and truths of nature.

No one, my good sir, will object to your desire to live as comfortably and elegantly as Mr. Jones the merchant, who has successfully pursued a legitimate money-making business, if you have got the means of living in that way as honestly as he has; but you certainly can not expect to have the respect of enlightened men if you have rivaled the magnificence of Mr. Jones by debauching your own nature and prostituting a noble art; and you are no more deserving of such respect than a quack doctor who has grown rich by imposing a worthless nostrum upon the credulous. The quack will say in justification, just as you do, that he must live, and that if the people would rather have a fraudulent article of medicine than a genuine one, it is not his fault but their misfortune, and that so long as advantage will be taken of their ignorance and credulity, he might as well profit by it as another.

Now, Mr. Smith, the fashionable portrait painter, I know what I am going to say will not offend you in the least; in fact, it will amuse you, for you will think it hits off your rival Brown to the life. You see you can no more recognize a truthful portrait of yourself than you can estimate the individuality of your sitter. There was a time in your life when you were moved by a generous ambition to make an honorable and lasting place for yourself in art. You really had quite an inclination in that way, but you

found the road to such honorable and lasting success a steep and hard one. Your love of art was not nearly so strong as your love of self-indulgence, and you never did have so great a desire to be a good painter as to have the reputation of being one. Adulation was a much more substantial and gratifying thing to your imagination than the power of growing to see the truth and rendering it. If you could have gained popularity and wealth by a faithful and earnest use of your higher capabilities, you would have preferred it, no doubt; but the humiliations of poverty and obscurity were beyond your endurance. To be cut and ignored by this and that fashionable person whom you admired, and to hear remarks about your seedy clothes, and doubts expressed as to your sanity, was too much. You had not gone far enough in the study of your art to paint a truthful portrait acceptably, and you gradually fell into the way of painting people as they thought they would like to look, and as their friends thought they ought to look, rather than as you saw them. Now you have grown rich and famous by catering to human vanity, just as the quack doctor has grown rich and notorious by catering to human credulity; and although you are a "respectable" man and "eminent" citizen, you are still a more pitiable character than the quack, because, though both now upon the same plane of obtuseness, you had by nature higher capabilities, and have destroyed them to that extent that you more than half believe you are as great an artist as you are reputed to be, and, like Mr. Boucicault, look abroad for ingenious theories by which we may account for the decline of art.

The fact is, if Mr. Boucicault had had the wit to see, after the production of his first play, that if he kept on writing the best he was capable of, and managed to scrape along for awhile on a thousand dollars a year—which a great many young men do nowadays—he might not only have greatly developed his powers and gained as large an income as he has to-day, but he might also have improved the English drama to that extent that his article on its decline would have been uncalled for. As it is, however, it is quite possible that this clever dramatist has done more to lower the artistic tone of the English and American stage than any living man, for the simple reason that he has avowedly perverted conspicuously great talents which should have been devoted to art, to the acquisition of money. He, like many other men, does not seem ever to have recognized the great truth that the best thing a human being can do is to develop the higher faculties by an earnest and judicious use of them, and that by making this the one great aim of life, all things else that are needful will follow as a natural result.

To contend that a comparatively enlightened people who have wealth and leisure enough to enable them to indulge their higher tastes, are incapable of producing a vital and noble art, is sheer fallacy. Popular art and popular literature must of necessity be always to some considerable extent rather poor and ephemeral stuff, for the reason that "plain people" have little power of discrimination, and the showy, pretentious article is always likeliest to impress them. But if we want to raise the standard of art and better the public taste, the reformation must begin with the artists themselves; but so long as the great body of artists continue to look at every thing from the bread-and-butter point of view, and plead in mitigation of their shortcomings the necessity of living, we need expect little progression, and will have to continue to delude ourselves with such like arguments as Mr. Boucicault's, that because the unknown was explored the ideal died a natural death; that it is the newspaper press and the scientific spirit of the age which are the impediments; that whenever the public wants a better quality of art we will have to give it them. We will have, in fact, to continue to look everywhere but at home for the causes of the decline of art. — *William R. O'Donovan.*

PORTRAITS OF WASHINGTON.

HERO worship, whatever may be Mr. Carlyle's opinion, is the normal condition of nations if not of individuals. There has never yet been a country which has not had its leaders, its heroes, to whom it did homage throughout its national existence; and very generally this homage has taken the form of the erection of monuments or the execution of portraits. The oldest specimens of sculpture we have are the iconic statues of Egyptian kings, executed, some of them, nearly sixty centuries ago. Nor is this

disposition to exalt and to perpetuate the features of favorite leaders in the least to be wondered at. It is only the carrying out, on a large scale, of the disposition which exists in almost every individual to preserve all possible mementoes of those who have been loved or valued as friends or mentors. America, while too young to have produced many heroes—with too short a history to give her a crowded Valhalla—has yet a few names in the list of her sons which awaken all the enthusiasm of the patriotic heart, and which we hope may never cease to be honored until the nation shall have been blotted out from the list of nations, and Lord Macaulay's New Zealander shall have taken his seat on the dome of the Capitol.

Of our heroes we do not purpose to speak at any length, or to give any opinion as to their respective fitness to occupy pedestals in the temple of Fame. Guided by the light of history—sometimes, it must be confessed, a very uncertain flame—none of them has lacked for a sufficient amount of portraiture; none of them has been neglected by the biographers; and, considering the quality, more than enough monuments have been erected to our illustrious dead. But there is one figure in our pantheon to which all must bow for all time to come, and which only appears the larger and the more worthy of worship the more we look at it. It is needless to say that we refer to Washington, the *Pater Patriæ*, who stands out from the pages of history not only as "first in the hearts of his countrymen," but as being second to no one in the eyes of the rest of the world. It is true of him, as it is not of all the world's heroes, that the more closely and carefully his life and character are studied, the more admirable they seem. But it is necessary that this study should be honest and conscientious, and not directed by too much of either partial friendship or partisan malice. It will not suffice to take the dicta of either such a determined adulator as Weems, or of so bitter an opponent as Cobbett. The truth in regard to any man occupying so prominent a place in the eyes of the world as did Washington, is always hard to get at, for the very reason that the moment his praises begin to be heard, there begins also the clamor against him which can be called up against any man who is thought worthy of attack; and the result of the controversy is, inevitably, that his admirers are led to overpraise him, in order to in some degree make up for the dispraise his enemies see fit to bestow on him. It often happens, therefore, that we get truer estimates of a man's character and powers long after his death than his contemporaries are able to form. Contemporary accounts and anecdotes are as valuable in the case of individual biographies as they are in the history of great national events; but a man's immediate friends or enemies are seldom capable of forming a dispassionate and unbiased opinion of him, just as the actors in a great national drama are usually unfit, from their very nearness to and participation in events, to write a complete history of them.

There are necessary, too, to the accomplished biographer or good historian, certain qualities which times of war or of great political activity do not call out. There is needed for the good historian, of either nations or individuals, a certain amount of imagination which the man of action very seldom possesses. Thus it happens that some of our best history is to be found in the pages of novels. The really great novelist should possess the power of putting himself in the place of his characters; and then, if he be conscientious in gathering his material, he can so reconstruct the characters and their surroundings as that his fiction becomes the very truest history. Instances of this are found in several of Scott's novels; in Bulwer's "Last of the Barons;" in Thackeray's "Colonel Esmond," and "The Virginians." In the last-named work it will be remembered that the great novelist draws us a full-length portrait of Washington; and, on its publication as a serial, many of our readers will remember the storm of indignation which was excited in some quarters on the reception of one of the chapters giving the quarrel scene in the tavern; it being asserted that to represent the great man as quarreling with boys over a bowl of liquor, and then accepting a challenge, was to degrade and belittle him. And yet the persons making this clamor only showed how little they appreciated the real character of the first President and of the times in which he lived. We had, as a nation, become so accustomed to setting Washington upon a pedestal and doing him homage as a demi-god, so to speak, that we ran in danger not only of becoming ridiculous by